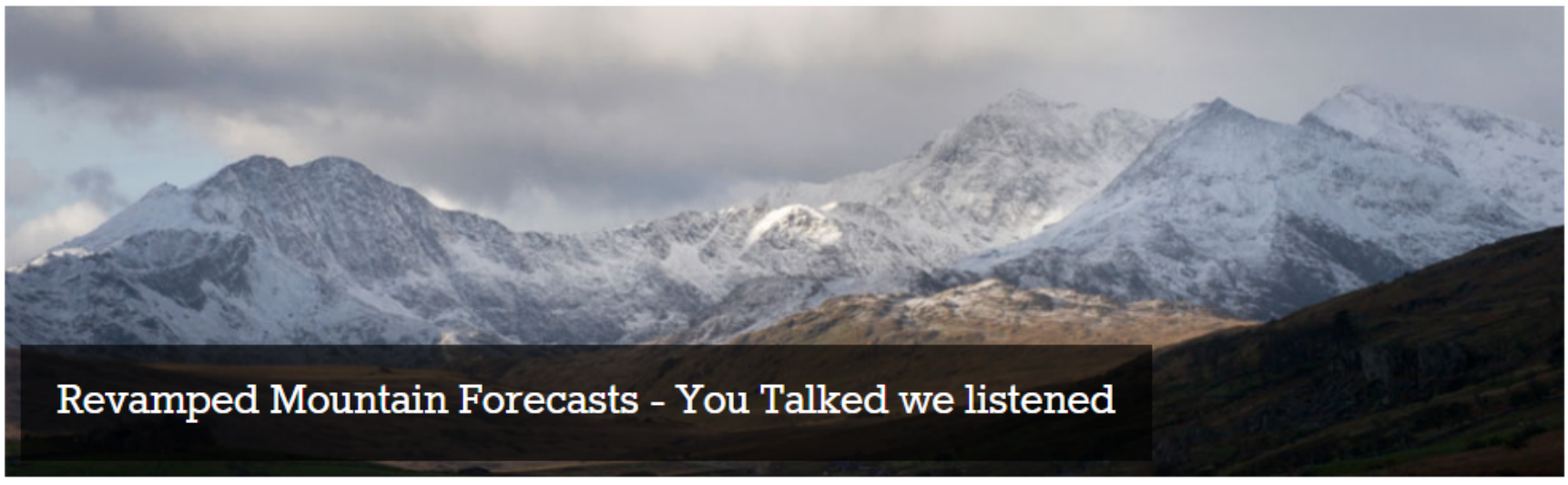

11 September 2013 - Following an extensive 'conversation' with members of the public, the Met Office is pleased to announce the launch of its newly revamped Mountain Forecasts.

The new and improved mountain weather forecasts will provide hill walkers and mountaineers with information to help keep them safer, whilst making the most of some of the most spectacular countryside in the UK.

The revamped pages provide mountain forecasts with a selection of the main mountain areas and those which have the highest visitor figures. Forecasts are issued twice per day and as a direct result of feedback received from the users of the existing pages; these now cover the full 24-hour period where previously only daylight hours were provided.

Users of the service will be able to click on the region they are planning their expedition to take place to see detailed information about the location including;

- Warnings and weather hazards
- Weather overview
- Location map
- Links to useful information services

In addition to these being refreshed and easier to read, the pages are now printable meaning that the latest forecast can be taken on expeditions or displayed in local youth hostels and climbing clubs, ensuring that as many people are made aware of the weather conditions as possible.

Mark Diggins, Co-ordinator for the Scottish Avalanche Information Service said: "The weather has a direct effect on snow-stability and therefore avalanche hazard. Gathering all hazard information is important in helping prepare for winter journeys into the mountains. Having weather and avalanche information available in one place will greatly help the public in this process, therefore we are very pleased that access to our service is more prominent."

Derrick Ryall, Head of the Met Office's Public Weather Service said: "Mountains can be inhospitable and dangerous places if you are not prepared. From one hour to the next, one hill to the next, they can exhibit a dramatic variation in weather conditions.

"We were really pleased to receive so much feedback on the old pages and that we have been able to use this to improve our service. The weather can vary a great deal and change very quickly, posing a significant risk to walkers' safety so the more we can do to reduce this risk, the better.

"Whether it's a well-planned expedition or a spur-of-the-moment decision to go to the hills, it is important to check the forecast".

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